Quickly Moving Incidents, With Genuine Human Interest, Among the Northwest Mounted Police.

Without Fear or Favor

BY WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINE.

TO the post at Red Wing came Emile Roubideau with the story of a man of the northwest mounted lying dead on Pincher creek, a bullet hole in the back of his head.

Emile had brought dispatches to Inspector Cairns. They told of the hold-up of the Sunset Flyer at Gray Mound by a single bandit who had robbed the express car of $30,000. Though a light snow had blotted out the trail, he had apparently headed north. Important, if true, this last. It meant that if the outlaw had crossed the line into Canada the redcoats must be on the lookout for him.

But the death of Jack Drummond came more nearly home to the inspector. Less than a week ago Jack had ridden from the barracks on special service, humming a dance tune. Had his life been snuffed out because he had found evidence against Brill Sheridan that would convict him?

While Roubideau talked with hands, shoulders and excited voice, Cairns sat erect behind his desk, a spare, soldierly man with a face keen as a sword blade. He put incisive questions, drew deductions and summoned Constable Barry.

Into the room presently quick-stepped a lean-flanked trooper in the prime of his splendid youth. There was no superfluous ounce on his trim, well set body. Barry saluted his grizzled chief and waited silently at attention.

"Afraid Drummond's gone west," the inspector said. "Shot from behind—on Pincher creek. Roubideau found his body."

The deep blue eyes of the constable winced. Jack Drummond had been his pal.

"Sure it's Jack?" he asked.

"Drummond's the only one out that way." Cairns turned to the messenger. "Tell your story again, Roubideau."

The French-Canadian burst into another eruption of words. It had been while he was making a short cut across Pincher that a gleam of scarlet had caught his eye and drawn him to the body of the murdered man. He had examined and "V'la! he wore the uniform. Oui, monsieur! A close-trimmed brown mustache."

The inspector dismissed Roubideau and gave Barry brief, crisp instructions.

"Take a driver with you and send Drummond's body back. Find out who shot him. If you can't do that get Brill Sheridan and bring him in. And I've just heard that some one—a single man, it seems, though he must have had help on the outside—robbed the western flyer at Gray Mound of $30,000. He's headed this way, they think. No description except that he's a big man. Keep a lookout for him."

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WITHIN the hour Barry was on the road to Pincher creek. A light wagon followed close at the heels of his mount. Roubideau was driving this.

The trail was hard and travel easy. By midafternoon they had reached Millard lake. Before dusk they were zigzagging up Pincher creek.

"Roun' ze next turn, m'sieur," Roubideau said, breaking a long silence.

The wagon had been left a half mile back. They were now following a rough deer trail through young timber.

Another five minutes and the officer swung from the saddle. He had come upon the body of a man lying face down among the dead leaves. At the base of the brain was a small hole which tunneled into the head. It led upward and to the left.

Barry turned over the body and recognized at once the face of Jack Drummond. His jaw tightened as he looked down at his friend.

The constable pushed back his emotion and bent his mind to the problem before him. If Drummond lay where he had fallen—there was no evidence that the body had been dragged through the thick carpet of leaves—he must have been shot by somebody crouched at the righthand side of the trail. If he had been in the open Jack would have seen him as he passed. Therefore he must have been behind the big cottonwood rooted close to the path. The shot had been fired while its victim was scarcely two paces distant.

Carefully Barry brushed aside the thin cover of snow above the leaves. He found nothing to show that anybody had been kneeling there. But back of the tree was a thicket and to one of the thorns there clung a small fragment of cloth, such a V-shaped scrap as might have been torn from a pair of trousers. The goods, Barry guessed, were a blue-and-white plaid with a thread of yellow. He put the piece of woolen stuff in his pocketbook. Those bits of woven thread might some day hang a man.

Across the saddle they carried the body of the soldier back to the wagon. The temperature was falling and the wind beginning to blow. Roubideau sniffed the air anxiously.

"By Gar, she gettin' her back up for howlin' hell, look like. Emile he think better burn ze trail for Red Wing."

"Righto, Roubideau," the officer assented promptly. "The sooner the quicker. Tell Inspector Gairns I'm headed for Scotty McDiarmid's old cabin on Crow creek."

The guide remonstrated. Better go back to the post with him till the storm had spent itself.

Barry shook his head. He did not explain that the motto of the scarlet-and-gold is "Maintieu le droit." None of the mounties ever turned back from a pursuit as long as he could stand and see.

They built a fire and ate. From the wagon the red coat took the supplies he had brought and Roubideau drove away.

The fire was under a cutbank, which protected somewhat from the wind whistling down the coulee. The night was bitter. A driving sleet pelted and the cold searched to the marrow of the man huddled under the ice-coated blankets. He slept only by snatches.

Twice he rose to soothe his fretful horse and to pile more wet cottonwood limbs on the smoky, depressed fire.

FROM a cheerless night Barry rose to a dismal dawn. Breakfast was a poor affair of half-cooked bacon and lukewarm coffee, for the fire was frankly surrendering to the storm. The trooper packed and began his cross-country ride.

He rode head-down into the buffeting of the sleet-packed wind. The chill of the tempest bit to the bones. The lashing of the fine sleet flogged his face savagely. He could be sure only of the general direction in which he traveled.

At times he walked, the horse at his heels. Again he rode. But there was no certainty as to where he was going. Crow Creek might be a hundred yards in front of him. It might be at his back. He was lost.

He gave the pony its head. Not a month ago he had ridden on Jim-Jack to the deserted McDiarmid cabin. It was possible the mustang might, by animal instinct, find its way there again.

Within half an hour Jim-Jack struck the creek and Barry dismounted and walked. Feet and hands were freezing. Eyelids and lashes were so coated with ice that he could hardly see.

Unexpectedly, he brought up in his stride. A fence barred the way. He leaned against it weakly. Hope leaped in his heart. He was saved.

Through a gap in the fence he led Jim-Jack. Out of the white mist a house emerged phantasmally, and a stable. In the stable Barry found hay and a pitchfork. Not until he had made Jim-Jack comfortable did he turn toward the house.

The constable opened the door and walked in. He pulled up near the threshold abruptly. A girl sitting before the open fire had jumped to her feet and was staring at him with startled eyes.

He closed the door and deadened the scream of the storm. They faced each other silently, their gazes locked in wordless question.

Barry tried to lift a stiff and frozen hand to his hat. Without warning, his knee joints buckled and he went down to the floor.

For a moment he was hazily near unconsciousness. When the mists cleared she was kneeling beside him, her arm under his head, her anxious face close to his.

"'S all right," he said, smiling at her. "I've been bucking the blizzard. That's all."

He sat up. She ran to a cupboard, found a bottle and glass and started to pour him a drink.

"Could you give me tea or coffee instead?" he suggested.

"If you'd rather."

She made preparations swiftly, without wasted effort.

Her guest moved to the fire, sat down heavily and drew off the frozen gauntlets.

"Take your boots off, too," she said.

In her voice was the unconscious arrogance of youth. Life throbbed in her, rich and abundant. It expressed itself imperiously.

Barry's stiff fingers fumbled abortively at the boots. Apparently she was not looking at him, but she gave up setting the table and came swiftly across the room to him.

"Let me!"

It was not a request, but an order. She was on her knees working at the ice-coated boots before he could protest.

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HER small, strong hands tugged at the boots which clung stubbornly to his feet. Slender she was, but her slenderness encased a poised strength born, probably, of sun and wind and the saddle.

"There," she cried, radiant with triumph, and put the second boot a safe distance from the fire.

The black, dark-lashed eyes that met his were in striking contrast with the thick, crisp brown hair and the fair skin.

Barry had the blithe heart, one in which a song could unexpectedly bubble up. He felt the lilt of it now, while he tried awkwardly to express his thanks.

"My name's Donald Barry," he told her by way of introduction.

"Mine's Celeste Nelson."

Of course! Celeste, the girl men dreamed about while they mushed through the snows of the lone lands, whose dark and flashing eyes they saw in the long camp fires of winter nights. He had heard much of her, for wherever men went in this thinly settled country they carried tales of Celeste Nelson. Her generosity, her free and untamed spirit, the wilful temper of the girl—these were household words. Her reputation was none too good among the staid Scotch settlers te the south and west, for she was Brill Sheridan's half-sister, and the rumor ran that she was to marry Black Jack Wardlaw.

What was she doing here? Why was this cabin, until a few weeks ago deserted, now roughly furnished for living? A glance showed him men's clothing and belongings scattered about the room, but none of those which tell of a woman's presence.

His feet and hands began to tingle with the pain of returning circulation. He took off his heavy fur coat to give his arms freer play for massaging the number flesh.

She stared at him, eyes dilated. Her face was an open book, in which he read resentment, anger, hatred, and, beneath them all, a paralysing and immediate fear. The sight of his uniform had transformed her. She was no longer an eager Samaritan with no thought except to serve; a crouched and wary enemy rather, one of unknown potential danger. There was about her a flare of savagery that carried back to the primitive.

"What are you here for? What do you want?" she asked.

"I'm here on business," he said quietly.

"What business?" A pulse fluttered in her brown throat. Her deep eyes searched him anxiously, suspiciously.

"I'm paid to ask questions, not answer them," he said smiling at her.

"What questions? I've nothing to tell you."

The reason for her panic came to him in a blinding flash of light. The goods of the dress she wore had for pattern a blue and white plaid with a thread of yellow. On the left-hand side, near the bottom of the skirt, a small, V-shaped wedge had been torn out.

HE was amazingly distressed. Was it possible that this clear-eyed girl, passionate and untamed though she might be, could have murder Jack Drummond from ambush? He rejected the thought violently, and even as he did so knew that he refused it illogically, because he did not want to accept it. She had information to give him. He must get it from her.

"You might tell me how and where you tore your skirt," he answered.

He knew he had struck home—read it in her flinching eyes.



FROM A COAT POCKET CELESTE DREW A PAIR OF STEEL HANDCUFFS.

"I'll not. It's none of your business," she cried.

From his pocketbook he took the fragment of cloth found at the scene of the murder. Quickly he stepped forward, stooped, and fitted it to the tear in the dress.

The girl furiously struck down his hand.

Grim-eyed and hard, he looked steadily at his hostess. Her defiant eyes fell sullenly.

"Are you going to arrest me," she demanded.

"What for?"

His curt counter-thrust disarmed her. It was not against the law to have a torn skirt. She had given herself away before any accusation had been made.

"You act so high an' mighty," she charged defensively. "You ride over me as if—as if——"

"What do you know of the killing of Jack Drummond?" he asked, evenly.

"Nothing. Nothing at all," she cried on a high note of apprehension. "I'll not say anything. I won't."

"Why were you on Pincher creek? What were you doing there? Who killed Drummond?"

"I won't talk. I won't. I've nothing to say. You can arrest me if you like."

"You are under arrest," he said quietly.

"Why? You have to tell me why. Do you think I—I killed him." She flung out the abhorred word passionately.

This time her eyes held fast. Some spark in him was blown to flame in response to her challenge. She was so young, had gone so little a way in life, yet had been so misused by it. In spite of herself, perhaps, she had traveled the crooked trails of outlawry. To Donald Barry came the conviction that this wildling of the plains stood at a fateful crossroads.

The sympathy that stirred in him did not reach the impersonal voice of his answer. He was first of all one of the mounted, sworn to do justice without fear or favor.

"I think you know who did."

"Why should I hurt him? I'd never even met the man."

"Have I said you did it?"

"You don't need to say so. I know what you think."

"Do you? Where is Brill Sheridan?"

She looked at him, her slim body tense. "What do you want with him?"

"Drummond went out to get him. I'm wondering if he found Brill."

He said it very quietly, but his steady eyes searched her. From her cheeks the suffusion of underlying crimson ebbed. Instantly he knew her fear was for her brother, not for herself.

The measure of his relief was surprising. She was shielding Brill. That was, technically, a crime. But it was different from cold-blooded murder.

"I don't know." Shadowed behind her words he found a note of horror.

"When did you see Brill last?"

"A week ago."

"Where?"

"At home."

"Where has he been since then?"

"I don't know. He left—on business."

"Tell you what it was?"

"He buys cattle—sometimes goes a 100 miles to get them. I don't think he mentioned where he was going this time. He's often away for weeks."

She turned away to cut the bread and pour a cup of coffee. Then, sullenly, she suggested that he had better eat.

While he was at table he asked questions and drew reluctant answers. He learned that Brill had taken care of her ever since her mother had died, when she was two years old. He had always been good to her, and it was plain that she repaid his kindness with love and devotion. She was willing enough to talk of Brill's gameness, of his fine loyalty to his friends, of his passionate sense of justice, but of the other side to his character—the fierce, impulsive turbulence that had made him a leader among the wilder spirits of the border—she had nothing to say.

CELESTE slept on the cot, Barry in blankets on the floor before the fire. The blizzard by morning had blown itself out. The sun was shining on a young world clothed in white.

Don Barry had the gift of companionship. As he helped the girl make breakfast it expressed itself gayly in jest and quip. In spite of herself, there were moments when the youth in her went out eagerly to meet his. She was starved for just what he had to give—the wholesome friendliness of a clean and gallant man who still found life a splendid adventure.

Then, in an instant, the song in her heart would go out like a snuffed candle. What hope of joy could there be in a world where one whom she loved and admired could kill in cold blood from ambush? And for a reason so sordid and base? Her mind sought vainly to escape its own conclusions. But how was that possible when the cause of the horrible deed, and the evidence of it that might yet convict the slayer, where in the room now, in a gunny sack under the bed? The stubborn facts could not be denied. At thought of them her face took on a stony look, as though stricken by inescapable woe.

Barry was wiping the breakfast dishes for her when the door opened and a man stood on the threshold. He stopped in his stride, astonished at sight of them. There was something catlike in the poise, in the slitted eyes that watched them closely, a chill and deadly hostility that lowered the temperature of the room.

The girl spoke first. "You here, Jack?" She was manifestly surprised.

The memory of Barry carried him back to school days in Ontario. He saw a soft-eyed woman, kind, tender, motherly, one who had taken to her heart and home a forlorn orphan boy. She was no kin of his, but he owed her a debt he could never pay. Never a month passed that he did not write to her. As far as could be he tried to take the place of the scalawag son who had drained her of her small means and vanished into the frontier west. It was her son, John Sanford, who had just come into the cabin.

Celeste introduced the men dubiously. Black Jack Wardlaw had a standing grudge at any one who wore the uniform of the Northwest Mounted.

No muscle in the face of this man, who now called himself Wardlaw, moved in the least, but the wary eyes held a cold, hard light as menacing as a revolver.

"Friend of yours?" he asked the girl, with a sneer.

In the undercurrent of his mind he was trying to place this scarlet-coated young fellow with the quiet and steadfast eyes. Where had he seen him before. A vague remembrance stirred uneasily in him.

"He came last night to get out of the storm," she said.

"Last night? Brill here?"

Celeste flushed. She understood the implication of the questions.

"No," she answered, and the challenge in her voice was as imperious as his.

"Where is he?"

"I don't know."

"What's this fellow want?"

"He hasn't told me. You can ask him."

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SHE stood straight and slender, facing the man with level gaze. Barry read in the long look they gave each other not only a clash of temperament, but a close and subtle understanding born of intimate knowledge of each other. What was the nature of the tie that bound them?

Wardlaw turned to the officer and flung a rude demand at him.

"What d'you want here, fellow?"

"This your house, Mr. Wardlaw?"

Barry spoke gently, courteously, but nobody could by any chance mistake that low-voiced tone for weakness.

"Don't pull that line of talk. I never did like spies. Don't like 'em now. You'll hit the trail." Wardlaw stood with his feet apart, hands crossed behind his back, leaning forward a little.

"When my business is finished," the redcoat added quietly. "And probably I won't travel alone."

'Meaning?"

"That I'll take with me the man who killed Constable Drummond."

A light of concentrated deadliness flickered in the eyes of the bad man. "Got any notion who he was?"

Barry had flung out his prophecy to see what effect it would have on Wardlaw. The man was not surprised. He knew of the death of the officer.

"Oh, yes!" The redcoat smiled the carefree smile of one who has no troubles.

"Put a name to him," Black Jack snarled, and his teeth showed like tusks.

"Soon. Not now."

The girl watched them tensely, nerves quivering with excitement.



THE CONSTABLE OPENED THE DOOR AND WALKED IN. A GIRL JUMPED TO HER FEET AND STARED AT HIM WITH STARTLED EYES.

THE door opened and a man stood blinking on the threshold while his eyes became accustomed to the semi-darkness of the cabin.

Celeste gave a little gasp of dismay, and instantly covered her mistake. "Mr. Rogers! I wasn't looking for you, Mr. Rogers. This gentleman is Constable Barry." And to the officer, "Shake hands with Mr. Rogers."

Barry took in the newcomer swiftly. The man was big and rangy, sandy-haired, with a long, drooping mustache a shade lighter. His person fitted accurately a description that had been given Barry of Celeste's big half-brother.

The constable stepped forward and shook hands. "Glad to meet you, Mr. Sheridan. I've been looking for you. Have to take you with me to the post."

"That so?" The cattleman gave Barry a hard, cold eye. "What do you claim you're pullin' me in for—if you do?"

"For running cattle on the Indian reservation without a permit."

"That all?"

"No. Inspector Cairns would like to ask you what you know about the death of Constable Drummond."

"Did he die?" asked the big man apparently surprised.

"He was murdered—shot from behind."

"Why, I saw him two days ago, up on Pincher creek."

"He was killed two days ago, on Pincher creek."

Brill Sheridan stared, open-mouthed. "Goddelmighty!" He was either a consummate actor or genuinely astonished. "Who killed him?"

"I'm asking you that," Barry said quietly.

Impetuously Celeste spoke. "Careful, Brill."

Beneath the tan the big man flushed angrily. "Are you tellin' me I killed Drummond?" he asked, and his manner was a threat.

"I'm offering you a chance to prove you didn't," the constable answered.

"An' I'm not takin' it. I don't have to prove a thing. If you claim I did it trot our your evidence."

Black Jack, standing with his hands crossed behind him, laughed in an ugly way. "That's the way to talk to this bird, Brill. Don't you let him take you to Red Wing."

"I ain't lettin' him."

"Don't make a mistake, Sheridan," Barry advised, quite undisturbed externally. "You're under arrest, and you'd better not make yourself trouble."

"Under arrest, am I? We'll see about that."

There was a swift movement of the cattleman's arm. His revolver jumped into sight.

They looked at each other, eyes gripped the young soldier-policeman and his prisoner behind his gun. Again the watching girl felt the thrill of drama. Brill Sheridan was of the outdoor, untamed west, a hard, tough citizen, who had been a law to himself. Don Barry was a slight, debonair youth, without any bluster or heroics. But he had the fighting edge back of the serene confidence with which he faced the weapon. Instinctively she knew it.

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CELESTE'S emotions played her false. She had been brought up to believe that the Northwest Mounted were interferers with personal liberty. This Barry wanted to take her brother to prison, where he might be convicted of a capital crime and executed. Her sympathy should have been wholly engaged on the side of Brill, but deep within her was a divided allegiance. She found her pulses throbbing to the courage of the soldier, her soul leaning toward some kindred quality in this young fellow whom she must reckon an enemy.

"Cut that rope on the table an' tie this fellow's hands, Jack," Sheridan said. "You've got my knife. I lent it to you last week an' you forgot to give it back."

"I mislaid it," Wardlaw growled.

The girl's heart hammered fast. "When did you lose it?" she asked.

"I didn't say I'd lost it. What I said was that I'd misplaced it."

"I wonder where." She was looking at him with dilated eyes—eyes in which joy and horror and some dawning knowledge seemed to struggle.

"It don't matter where." Black Jack looked at her, snarling. "What's eatin' you, girl?"

Sheridan interrupted the by-play. "Better take his gun away first, Jack."

Quickly Celeste stepped forward. "I will."

She walked back of the constable, removed his revolver and put it on the table behind him.

"Anything else on him?" Brill snapped.

"Yes."

From a coat pocket Celeste drew a pair of steel handcuffs.

"Good enough. We'll see how they fit, Mr. Policeman," jeered Wardlaw.

The eyes of Barry and the girl met for an instant.

"How do they work, Brill?" she asked.

"I'll show you."

In order not to get between the weapon and the man whom it covered, Celeste passed back of Wardlaw, who still straddled awkwardly, head down and hands crossed behind him.

Again for a fraction of a second her gaze met that of the Northwest Mounted trooper. A message flashed forth and back. There was a sharp click of steel.

Celeste had handcuffed Black Jack Wardlaw.

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THE man let out a savage roar of rage. Sheridan stared at him and at Celeste, puzzled, his slow brain stunned by this development. Simultaneously with the click of the cuffs Barry leaped for the revolver on the table.

His voice rang clear and strong. "I arrest you, John Sanford, alias Black Jack Wardlaw, in the king's name."

Brill frowned. "What for?" he demanded harshly.

"For the murder of Constable Drummond," replied Celeste swiftly.

Black Jack struggled furiously to free himself from the steel bands. "That's a lie!" he shouted, and followed his denial with a flood of curses.

"It's the truth," the girl flung back. "And, O Brill, I thought you did it—till just now!"

"Thought I killed Drummond. Shot him from behind?" her brother said, with keen resentment.

"I ought to have known better," she wailed, "but when I found your knife—"

"Found my knife—where?"

"I tell you, Brill, she's in cahoots with this spy. They've been here all night together. She's his——"

Black Jack's furious scream died down. The cold rim of Barry's revolver was pressed against his forehead.

"Let's hear your story from the beginning, Miss Nelson," the officer suggested.

Celeste told it, simply. A letter had come to Brill after he had left the ranch. Thinking it might be important, she opened the envelope. The note was unsigned, but she recognized the writing as that of Wardlaw. A reference in it made her uneasy. Black Jack was urging her brother to join him in some undertaking darkly hinted at, the nature of which seemed to be both lawless and dangerous.

Brill had told her he was going to Pincher Creek. She became restless, saddled, and rode after him. That was the day before yesterday. She had come upon the body of one of the Northwest Mounted. He had been shot from behind.

She was greatly shocked and disturbed, for such tragedy was new to her. Foot tracks led from the scene. She followed them. An old Cree had taught her how to read signs and she had often diverted herself by cutting trails. The ground was moist enough to leave prints of shoes. These brought her to a coulee where at the foot of a pine tree she found her brother's knife.

There was fresh dirt on the blade. She was filled with apprehension of disaster impending even before her heel sank into soft soil. Leaves had been carefully strewn over the place that had been dug, with the evident intention of concealing it.

Using the blade of the knife, she flung out the dirt and found a gunny-sack, inside of which were smaller sacks.

"I was sick with worry," she went on. "I had to find Brill, and I remembered Jack Wardlaw had fitted up this old cabin. So I came here. The sack's under the bed now."

Brill dragged it out. Inside he found his knife and sacks with broken express seals. Within them was currency to the amount of $30,000.

"While he was heading this way Wardlaw must have seen Drummond and thought he was out after him. So he shot him from behind, and because he was frightened at the pursuit being so close he buried his swag," Barry guessed.

Black Jack broke into a storm of impotent and desperate denial. Beads of sweat stood on his forehead.

"You ain't gonna turn your back on an old pal, are you, Brill?" he whined. "After you'n me have trained together all these years."

Sheridan flushed angrily. "What makes you figure I'd stand for cold-blooded murder, you yellow wolf? Maybe I don't care a whole lot for these bossy police, but I reckon I'm a white man anyhow."

The murderer appealed to the constable. His memory had functioned at last. He knew now that the officer was the boy whom his mother had loved.

"You got the wrong man, Don," he pleaded. "I swear you have. If you take me back with you it'll kill my mother. You'll be doing it the same as if you put a bullet through her head."

"That's enough," Barry cut in sharply. "We'll start now."

But all the way back to the fort there rode with him the picture of a small gray-haired woman with soft, tender eyes and tremulous mouth. Black Jack told the truth. This would kill her. She was in precarious health, and she would never survive the blow. The tragic irony of it filled him with woe, that her son must come to his death through the agency of the man whom she had made her son by reason of the love she had lavished on him. Was there no escape? No way out of the horrible dilemma?

"Maintien le droit!" He was pledged by his oath to do justice without fear or favor. Barry straightened his shoulders. A man's honor could not be rooted in dishonor. He had, first of all, to be loyal.

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AT the fort Barry found a letter waiting for him. It was from a nurse in Toronto, and it told of the death of his friend Julia Sanborn.

He was reading the letter a second time when a light step sounded. Dark eyes stabbed into his. "What about my brother?" In Celeste's eyes was just a flare of the antagonism he had stirred when she first caught sight of the uniform.

"It won't go hard with him," Barry promised. "The inspector wants a straight talk with him. If your brother's reasonable——"

"Brill will be," she said quickly. "He doesn't feel the same as he did." Then, passionately, she added, "It was that man, Black Jack. He was just spoiling everything."

"You didn't like him?"

"Never. He was always hateful, but I couldn't get rid of him. Brill understands now."

"Glad of that. It'll be better for him, and better for you."

"Yes," she said, a little wistfully; and on the heels of impulse added, "I've always wanted us to be—decent folks—so that things would be different.

"They're going to be different." He took her small brown hands in his. His gaze held hers fast. "I'm going to attend to that personally—if I may, Celeste Nelson."

Life irradiated her eyes her cheeks, her whole slender, eager youth.

"I'm listening to you, Donald Barry," she whispered.

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Uses of Wood.

IF one were to approach a person on the street and be so impertinent as to tell him that the stockings he wore were made largely from wood it is most probable that he would regard you as being a suitable candidate fora lunatic asylum. Equally surprised (and indignant) would be a young lady if we told her that her silk frock was 80 per cent wood. Furthermore, you would be still more amazed if, while at breakfast, some one imparted the information that the sausage you were eating had casings made of pure wood.

Silk is composed largely of cellulose, and as wood is composed chiefly of that substance, it has been found possible to produce silk from wood. The cellulose of the wood is first converted into a substance known as viscose, which greatly resembles celluloid and is often used as a substitute for it; also as casing for sausages. In the production of silk the viscose is dissolved in water, forced through the capillary tubes of a spinning machine and the fine threads produced are hung up to dry and to be converted into cellulose by warm currents of air. The threads are woven then into "silk" cloth with a cotton warp. This artificial silk is difficult to distinguish from the original product and is offering keen competition to the original article in the market.

In Wisconsin there is what is known as the forest products laboratory, and it is there that Uncle Sam employes a staff of experts to find means of extending the usefulness of wood in the daily life of the nation and further to perfect the various chemical and mechanical processes directly connected with wood. The laboratory is provided with miniature paper making machines, apparatus for the production of grain alcohol, still, apparatus for the study of fire prevention and, in fact, everything necessary for the practical experimentation of processes involving wood.

There are many varieties of trees in this country that are regarded as of little commercial value. Many of these the laboratory has put through a rigid test. Among those which have come triumphantly through their examination are the white fir, several species of which are found in our Pacific coast states; the lodge pole pine, also a western growth; Engelmann spruce, perhaps not so well known, and several others.

Paper made from the wood of these trees has been tried out successfully on several metropolitan dailies.

Even the bark of trees is not overlooked in this efficient laboratory. Hemlock, in particular, is promising in this respect. The bark where utilized at all now is burned as fuel. It could, however, be employed in the manufacture of felt roofing. Rag stock, now quite precious, is largely used in the industry. Hemlock bark could take up an appreciable percentage of this work. As the annual output of roofing felt approximates 200,000 tons, this conservation is of prime importance.

The consumption of wood in the United States is enormous. It is claimed by reliable authorities that almost 60,000,000,000 board feet of wood are cut yearly in this country alone.

There are more than a million men employed in the United States in the various phases of the lumber industry. It may be safe to assume that $2,000,000,000 is a just valuation of the annual product. Here is a business so gigantic in its proportions that this laboratory's findings are of prime importance, not only too manufacturers, but to the nation at large.

A Hole in Glass.

IT is said that a hole may be made in thin glass by pressing upon the glass a disk of wet clay. Make a hole through this clay the size of the hole desired in the glass, being sure that the glass is clean and bare. Now pour molten lead into the hole and the lead and glass will drop through at once. The quick heating of the glass at one point causes a circular crack to form, the outline of which corresponds to the hole made in the clay.